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NATO TAKES STOCK

ANNCR: NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN DISCUSSES THE JUST-OPENED ANNUAL SPRING MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS IN OSLO.

VOICE: THE FIFTEEN FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN THE NORWEGIAN CAPITAL HAVE A BUSY FORTY-EIGHT HOURS AHEAD OF THEM. IT IS A PERIOD THAT WILL BE REFLECTED IN THE COMING MONTHS IN SUCH PROBLEM AREAS AS THE CYPRUS QUESTION, THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION, AND THE SMOLDERING CRISIS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE FOREIGN MINISTERS, BOTH IN CLOSED PLENARY SESSIONS AND IN BILATERAL TALKS AMONG THEMSELVES, WILL ALSO LOOK AHEAD TO THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE OF THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY-- BOTH IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TERMS.

A MAJOR QUESTION BEFORE THE MINISTERS IS THE OUTCOME OF THE JUST-RESUMED TALKS BETWEEN THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION MEMBERS AND THE SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF THE WARSAW PACT ON BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE. AND UNDOUBTEDLY THE NATO MINISTERS WILL BE THINKING OF THE COMING ELECTIONS IN ITALY AND WHAT COURSE NATO SHOULD PURSUE IN THE EVENT OF A POST-ELECTION GOVERNMENT POSSIBLY INCLUDING COMMUNISTS. BUT THE SUBJECT IS NOT EXPECTED TO COME UP AT THE NATO COUNCIL'S FORMAL MEETINGS. ANOTHER TOPIC VERY MUCH ON THE MINDS OF THE NATO MINISTERS IS THE NEW INCONTROVERTIBLE FACT OF THE SOVIET UNION'S EMERGENCE AS A SUPERPOWER WITH THE MILITARY RESOURCES TO INTRUDE ANYWHERE IN THE NON-COMMUNIST DEVELOPING WORLD. NATO'S TOP COMMANDER, GENERAL ALEXANDER HAIG, RECENTLY MENTIONED THIS FACT IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN A NATO MAGAZINE. GENERAL HAIG CITED THE SOVIET ROLE IN ANGOLA AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE NEW FLEXIBILITY CHARACTERIZING MOSCOW'S MILITARY POLICY.

THE NATO COMMANDER IN CHIEF URGED A UNITED DRIVE BY NATO MEMBERS TO POOL THEIR COLLECTIVE RESOURCES-- ECONOMIC AND MILITARY-- TO COUNTERACT THE GLOBAL SOVIET MILITARY POWER. HE IMPLIED THAT ONLY THROUGH NATO UNITY AND FIRMNESS IN SUCH AN EFFORT COULD NEW SOVIET ADVENTURES IN THE THIRD WORLD BE COUNTERED.

THE HAIG MESSAGE UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE MUCH ON THE MINDS OF THE MINISTERS IN OSLO. ALSO PROMINENT IN THEIR THINKING WILL BE FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING'S PLEDGE TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TUESDAY THAT FRANCE WILL-- AS HE PUT IT-- "MAKE THE EFFORT AND SACRIFICES" NEEDED FOR A STRONG WESTERN DEFENSE POLICY TO BALANCE THE CONTINUED SEARCH FOR RELAXED TENSIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

ALL THESE ELEMENTS, THEN, ARE BEING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN OSLO IN THE SEARCH FOR AN EQUATION THAT WILL STRENGTHEN NATO IN THE FACE OF THE CHALLENGES THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE POSES FOR IT.

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